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LETTER DATED 17 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 12 September 1997, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 12 September 1997 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the eighth monthly report on Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on SFOR operations

SFOR operations

1. Approximately 36,500 SFOR troops are currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all members of NATO and from 20 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 July-20 August), there were no significant changes in the overall size and composition of the force. However, the multinational divisions started to make force adjustments in preparation for the municipal election. SFOR has continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance by means of ground and air patrols and to make random inspections of weapons cantonment sites. During the period, approximately 2,500 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, while the SFOR helicopter fleet flew 124 hours.

3. Support continues to be provided to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), with SFOR maintaining its regular, coordinated training missions over Eastern Slavonia in order to exercise plans to provide close air support if necessary.

4. In pursuance of a policy communicated to the Entity Presidents by the SFOR Commander on 7 August to assist with restructuring and reforming the Entity Police Forces, on 15 August General Saric, Commander of the Republika Srpska Specialist Police, was given a copy of the supplementary instructions to the parties concerning the Specialist Police. These lay out the procedures to be followed during the period in which the Specialist Police are subject to annex 1A of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, prior to their recognition and certification by the International Police Task Force (IPTF) to act as a component of the civil police. General Saric indicated that he would comply with these instructions, and progress since then has been good. The same instructions have been passed to the Federation Police authorities, where restructuring under IPTF is more advanced, for compliance by 30 August.

5. On the morning of 17 August, members of the Specialist Police loyal to Mrs. Plavsic took control of the Public Security Centre in Banja Luka. SFOR was requested by the Serb Member of the Collective Presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, to allow the Ministry of the Interior Specialist Police to expel them. Permission was denied and SFOR took action to deal with the breach of the supplementary instructions to the parties. At the same time, IPTF responded to the direction from the Office of the High Representative to investigate reports of the existence of evidence, within the Public Security Centre, concerning serious violations of human rights and telephone interception. SFOR was asked to assist in providing area security. This investigation discovered unauthorized arms, and IPTF continues to examine possible evidence of the bugging of telephones of President Plavsic and Constitutional Court judges. By the evening of 18 August the Public Security Centre had been handed back to the Ministry of the Interior Civil Police. On the morning of 20 August, SFOR and the IPTF returned to the

Public Security Centre and other police sites in Banja Luka to investigate reports of further irregularities. Civil police from outside Banja Luka, who occupied these facilities, were expelled. Large quantities of arms and ammunition were discovered. These were confiscated and are still being inventoried, but initial estimates are that they included up to 12 tons of equipment, including automatic rifles, rocket launchers, grenades and mines.

6. Between 1 and 5 August 1997, protest actions against the return of Muslims to the area occurred in Jajce and in the valley immediately east of the town (comprising the villages of Divicani, Lendici, Bucici, Kruscica and Donja Sibenica). Muslims were harassed and fled the villages of Bucici and Lendici, and a number of roadblocks were set up. SFOR dismantled the roadblocks and maintained a presence in the area in order to prevent violence and destruction or vandalism. A return programme for the period 16 to 21 August 1997 was agreed. In that time 341 heads of family (equivalent to 1,200 people) returned to the valley. The only incidents were two land mine explosions which occurred in Divicani. SFOR asked explosive ordnance disposal teams to assess the situation and clear the area.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. Overall, the entities remain substantially compliant in most aspects across the area of operations. The situation throughout the theatre remains militarily stable. However, while there is general compliance concerning the entity armed forces, the police of both entities still do not meet internationally accepted standards. The actions, through recent operations to control the Specialist Police as forces under the General Framework Agreement for Peace, are proceeding well.

8. During the reporting period, a total of 481 inspections of weapons storage sites were carried out by SFOR. By party, this figure comprises 170 Bosniac, 130 Croat and 181 Bosnian Serb inspections. SFOR continues to confiscate weapons which, after a period of time to allow for appeals, are normally destroyed. With the exception of the incident in Banja Luka involving the Bosnian Serb Specialist Police, the following weapons were confiscated over the past month: from the Bosniac Army, 20 AK47 rifles, 20,000 7.62 rounds of ammunition and an item of electronic warfare equipment; from the Bosnian Croat Forces, two AK47 rifles, two 76mm anti-tank guns, 100 tank rounds, 169 napalm rounds and five small arms; from the Bosnian Serb Army, 50 AK47 rifles, one M80 rocket launcher. Two long-barrel weapons, 1,633 7.62 rounds of ammunition, 16 pistols, 40 hand grenades and six rifle grenades; and from civil components, 160 pounds of ordnance and one pistol.

9. During the past month, SFOR has removed, or participated in the removal of 10 unauthorized checkpoints (three Bosnian Serb and seven Federation). It is apparent that the number of checkpoints has been reduced through the efforts of IPTF with SFOR support. Equally apparent is that checkpoints continue to be intermittently established in both the Federation and the Republika Srpska. Specialist Police have been involved in a significant number of these incidents and the SFOR operation SECURE BEAT, a four-phase plan, starting on 8 August to bring the Entities' Specialist Police under article 1A of the General Framework Agreement for Peace as Forces and to ensure their compliance with the IPTF civil

police restructuring programme, should assist freedom of movement. Republika Srpska customs and police officials continue to harass trucks of non-governmental organizations transporting humanitarian aid items into the Federation.

10. During the reporting period, SFOR monitored a total of 662 training and movement activities (249 Bosniac, 203 Bosnian Croat and 210 Bosnian Serb).

11. Over the reported period, all the training and movement bans imposed by SFOR on the parties for failing to meet de-mining requirements were lifted: on 28 July, the ban on HVO TSG corps by the multinational division (SW); on 17 August, the three bans on the third VRS corps, the HVO ORASJF group and the II ABIH corps by the multinational division (N). On 1 August, the training ban due to discrepancies in previous movement and training activities imposed on the seventy-seventh VRS regiment of the seventh Army corps was lifted by the multinational division (SE). Additionally, on 6 August, the ban on VRS air and air defence activities due to radar and missile infringements was lifted.

12. Over the reporting period, entity armed forces, under SFOR supervision, removed 3,484 explosive devices (224 anti-tank mines; 3,184 anti-personnel mines and 76 items of unexploded ordnance) from 280 mined areas. Since 10 March, 2,452 anti-tank mines, 10,403 anti-personnel mines and 712 items of unexploded ordnance have been removed from a total of 1,307 areas. The rate of operations in the first week of the reporting period was slow mainly due to the spate of accidents in the previous reporting cycle. There have been three accidents this month, with two of them resulting in serious injuries. In spite of those accidents, this is the best monthly performance yet reported. In general, compliance improved considerably. The Bosniac Army tends to be consistent with its compliance; the Bosnian Croat Army has improved considerably and the Bosnian Serb Army has in fact performed better than was expected, although they remain the least compliant of the three Armies. The threat of training and movement bans is a significant factor.

13. Since 20 July 1997, there have been two meetings of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line Subcommission, held on 31 July and 12 August 1997 in Lukavica. All three parties were in attendance. During the Subcommission meetings the negotiators for the Federation (Bosniacs and Croats) and the Republika Srpska reached agreement on a proposal to exchange land south of Klujc (Dobocani, in favour of the Federation) for land north of Sanski Most (Koprivna, in favour of the Republika Srpska). The Agreement must now be ratified by the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation and the Republika Srpska and countersigned by the SFOR Commander for implementation to take place. Additionally, the Republika Srpska made a new map proposal for a gain of territory north-east of Sarajevo which is linked with a Federation proposal in the Kladanj-Vares area made in August 1996. On request of the Federation/Croat negotiator, the discussion on land swaps in the Posavina area was postponed until after the municipal elections.

14. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IPTF and SFOR coordinated and secured the release of two Serb prisoners-of-war held in the Zenica military prison. Acting on information provided by relatives concerning their whereabouts, IPTF discovered the two men locked in a room in a building

situated at the rear of the main administration block, away from the other detention facilities. The prisoners-of-war were transported to Banja Luka and reunited with their families. Ambassador Kai Eide indicated that this was a gross violation of international humanitarian law and the terms of the Peace Agreement and asked Federation authorities to investigate and bring to justice those involved in the human rights violations of these two men. IPTF will also be conducting an investigation. Evidence indicates that the factions continue to hold detainees, notwithstanding the provisions of annex 1A, article IX, Prisoner Exchanges, that comprehensive lists were to be supplied to ICRC to facilitate its work in implementing and monitoring the plan for release and transfer of prisoners.

Cooperation with international organizations

15. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to offer assistance to the international organizations in theatre, and provides security for IPTF inspections, as demonstrated by operation SECURE BEAT (see para. 9 above).

16. Media abuses continued in this period, with the Republika Srpska state radio and television outlet being particularly biased and vitriolic. SFOR and its Civic Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Task Force has increased efforts to work with the Office of the High Representative and the international community on the media problems through several integrated working groups, sharing of resources and coordinated operations to develop means to counter blatant media bias and improve the populace's ability to have alternative access to information.

17. SFOR support of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia investigations continued. The main activities on exhumation sites were carried out in the Brcko and Srebrenica areas, with SFOR providing a secure environment for the Tribunal teams.

18. On the municipal elections, SFOR is working extensively with the other international organizations to help ensure a secure environment for their conduct. A security plan has been developed and approved by the entities that includes instructions concerning the movement of voters.

19. The Supreme Allied Commander of Europe has agreed that arms control experts working for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) may accompany SFOR during routine cantonment inspections. This will help resolve the under-reporting issue by allowing treaty and weapons knowledgeable officers to view holding sites and then assist the parties in correcting their declarations. During the reporting period, Republika Srpska updated its declarations under article IV of the Peace Agreement, adding a further 841 pieces of heavy equipment to its previous declaration.

20. SFOR also supports many other international and local organizations and authorities. The activities occur throughout the country, often within the immediate locale of an SFOR camp. For example, SFOR troops are continuing work on the Tuzla-Brcko railway, with completion due at the beginning of November 1997; a CIMIC Task Force public health team has been assisting in the training of doctors; a telecommunications team has been coordinating efforts for

the movement of equipment and site preparation for the free election radio network in preparation for the municipal elections; veterinary teams have been monitoring cattle in quarantine; and SFOR engineers signed road contracts with Republika Srpska companies on 11 August that should act as prototypes for opening up the Republika Srpska to similar contracting procedures in the future.

21. SFOR and the Office of the High Representative have continued to pursue the issue of opening up the regional airports. Under the General Framework Agreement, SFOR is required gradually to transfer control of the regional airports to the appropriate institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The issue has a clear link to the Sintra deadlines and to reconstituting the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). In response to the latest Serb argument against signing, the Office of the High Representative, on 21 July 1997, issued a legal opinion. Following a series of meetings in the Council of Ministers and bilaterally with the Serb side, pursued by the SFOR Deputy Commander to explain the issue and seek agreement, the memoranda of understanding for Tuzla, Mostar and Banja Luka airports were signed by Dr. Siljadzic and Mr. Tomic following a meeting of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers on 4 August 1997. Mr. Bosic (Serb Co-Chairman) refused to sign.

22. At a meeting on 8 August 1997, the Presidency agreed to the rules of procedures for the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). This development will allow SCMM to move into discussion of more substantive issues. SCMM will coordinate the activities of the armed forces of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee is due to meet at least once a month. The rules of procedure establish the membership of SCMM as the three Members of the Presidency, the Defence Ministers of the Federation and the Republika Srpska and the Chiefs of Staff of the Federation and Republika Srpska armed forces, plus one further nomination from each President. The High Representative, the SFOR Commander and the OSCE Head of Mission, or their representatives, are observers. The Foreign Ministry of Bosnia and Herzegovina will also be represented by an observer. The Members of the Presidency may invite other persons to attend as observers or in an advisory capacity. Members of the Presidency will chair the Committee. The Chairmanship will alternate between the Republika Srpska and the Federation.

Outlook

23. The overall situation in theatre is expected to remain stable, despite continuing increased tension in the Republika Srpska. SFOR will continue to carry out its mission firmly but fairly, without tolerating any recourse to force or violence, or the unauthorized deployment of military or paramilitary forces. In the forthcoming period major activities for SFOR will include support for the municipal elections, support for a free and balanced media and the continuing conduct of Operation SECURE BEAT.